

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE
TAPE 10 OF 11; 1988-102

INTERVIEW WITH: Harlan Hubbard
CONDUCTED BY: Joanne Weeter
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LOCATION: Payne Hollow, Kentucky

[part of a series of interviews by Joanne Weeter. Ms. Weeter is not heard at the beginning of this tape, which is instead a monologue by Mr. Hubbard. He may have been repeating part or all of a narrative from an earlier interview that was not successfully recorded. Later in this interview, the tape is stopped, then begins again with Ms. Weeter interviewing Mr. Hubbard.]

HARLAN HUBBARD: Although I was never much good in mathematics, I seemed to have an interest in figures. When I was very young, I figured that if I had been born five days sooner and I lived to be 101 years old I might live in three different centuries. That seemed important in those days, but now it has little relevance to me.

It is only natural that a person's mother should be the most important figure in their life when they're very young, and it was so with me. My father, of course, he died when I was seven years old and for some time before his death he was in poor health. As I look back, I can remember nothing that we ever did together -- except once, and this seems strange. I'm quite sure that I remember that he took me to Cincinnati to have a tooth filled. That in itself seems rather strange but it could be because I got a bad start with teeth. I remember he took me to Dr. Thorne, a dentist, with whom I had connections later in my youth, and after the work was done and we started home he took me by the hand in a very

kindly way and said, to cheer me up, "Harlan, now you can eat candy without having it hurt your teeth." Well, I really appreciated that, I guess. Now it seems a sad commentary on my diet in those early years. I never did have good teeth; they look nice but they required a lot of attention through my youth. When I got to be middle-aged a change came and I had no trouble with them after that, to amount to anything. I think that was due to the food that Anna fed to me, in addition to some ideas of my own, I guess. The only other instance I can remember in my father's – in my early life connected with my father was that one early evening it seems he and I were sitting in the parlor -- it was dark and the oil lamp was lit, I remember it was a very elaborate affair with a painted glass base and a painted shade, didn't seem to belong to our place, it was too fancy -- but my father was always picking up things and bringing them home as he was a painter and decorator. He often worked on houses that had been vacated, getting ready for new tenants, and there's no telling what he could find in those houses. He seemed to have a taste for scavenging, scavenging as I do now. Must run in the family. Anyway, as we sat there the lamp begin to smoke; I imagine my mother had just lit it and gone out into the other -- another part of the house. And my father tried to correct that, he's quite weak and he reached over and turned the wick a little but it smoked even more. I imagine he turned the wick in the wrong direction. I don't think he called "Rose," but anyway, she came and was quite flustered to see the lamp smoking so furiously but it just took a turn of the wick in the other direction to correct it. I can see no point to that story at all but I remember it very vividly. [pause]

My mother and I did a lot of things together but -- because I wasn't very old before I became rather useful to her. I could run errands and go with her when she went places and

she was always going somewhere, as I mentioned. I don't feel that she took any great interest in me, either. I think at that time she was under considerable strain due to my father's condition and the fact that we had no income, nothing saved. The situation was corrected in a few years when Frank and Louie began to work, especially Lucien. He went to work as soon as he graduated from Bellevue High School and from the first he gave part of his earnings to Mom. Sometimes I thought that Mom would have liked a girl instead of another boy, two of which she had, of course, and then when I showed signs of being a artist [microphone is moved, resulting noise makes comments unclear] it was a little too much; she thought one artist in the family was plenty. And especially the kind of artist, later on the kind of artist I became, which seemed to have no interest in success or financial returns.

I had finally seen that I should be earning some money and with my ideas that I -- this was later on, of course, that I contracted about living in the woods and living in the country especially -- my idea of earning some money was to, since we had to live in town, I worked at manual labor. And to Mom, with her good Swingle upbringing, that was a step in the wrong direction.

Well, I won't go ahead so fast, I must go back when I was quite young. She -- for some reason, she kept me wearing dresses for longer than seemed normal, or it didn't seem normal at all for boys to wear dresses, but I've been told that in those days it was customary for mothers to put dresses on boys for awhile. I just read recently that uh, in a new biography of Ernest Hemingway -- I didn't read the biography but I read a review of it -- that she had that same quirk, only to a much stronger degree. It's hard to understand in that case. Anyway, that was soon outgrown.

My mother had a great influence on me. It was all for the good, too.

[tape is stopped, then resumed, and Mr. Hubbard is joined by Joanne Weeter.]

I hate to waste my time saying one, two, three, so I'll try to say something that you might use in our tape. [both laugh] That idea of numbers comes up every once in awhile in my life and just recently I realized that it had quite a significance. The first forty-three years of my life were spent under my mother's domination and the next forty-three years of my life were spent under my wife's, Anna. Now I don't mean by domination that they ruled my life entirely, they were both very considerate in a way, and I just mean that everything that I did I had to take them into consideration and they influenced me greatly. [tape stops, then is resumed] Those two forty-three years add up to eighty-six and since I'm eighty-seven, I've had one year on my own and I feel like I'm starting a new series. I really don't think I have much chance of working it up to forty-three but it's going to be a little different anyway. I don't regret much in the past because it was all, most of it was all very good and I had a happy childhood.

Some of the – the worst time came after that, I think, after I came back from New York and all the new ideas I had about painting and living. Of course, my whole idea was then what I wanted to do was to go out and live in the woods, roam the riverbank, and turn my back on cities for good. I kept turning that over in my mind how I could accomplish it; maybe I wasn't ready for it. I have an idea, I've always had in my life, that what we need comes to us at the right time and it's better not to force things and do something that's real hard to do or unnatural or hurt somebody else. On the other hand, I didn't want to feel like I was not doing all I could in my chosen field. I had very little encouragement along that line.

Of course, my mother, as I have said, was-- had no sympathy at all with poverty or lack of success. I don't think she was ambitious for any great amount of money but she felt that she had to be respectable and she wanted me to be, too.

I did --one reward for my working for carpenters, I learned to build a house to some extent and as I think I've said, I built this house for my mother and me to live in in 1923 and she did enjoy that, too. It's one of the happiest times of her life, I think, because she had nothing to worry about, she had income enough to buy what she wanted and live the way she wanted and she had many friends and since we were living in Fort Thomas she had many friends that she didn't have in Bellevue. And many social events like she belonged to bridge clubs and had me to take her around any place she wanted to go. [pause] So I think it was all worthwhile.

JW: Tell me a little bit more about the house that you built for your mother.

HH: Yes. I couldn't just build a house that -- like somebody else had built, using their plans and everything. The idea of it, the structure and form of it, came from an old house I'd seen out in Campbell County in the country, on my walks, on my walks, and it retained pretty much of that character, too; I was quite pleased with it. I made some mistakes, of course, but they weren't too serious.

JW: Why did that house in Campbell County appeal to you?

HH: It was -- something I'd like to make a picture of and I did. There was something beautiful about its harmony and it was so natural, too, it wasn't like a city house, which is so pretentious and copying somebody else's house or some style of architecture, it was just pure Kentucky. I don't think anybody ever appreciated it enough, in that respect.

But -- I was determined to have a stone foundation, which was a very serious mistake, I think, because a concrete block foundation would have gone so much quicker and been so much easier, but I enjoyed the stone work and I had a -- a black man to help me, who I'd worked with on a building before and I had a young man, Tom Sheffel, who lived on the riverbank, his father was fleet master at Coal Haven where the barges were tied up and I got acquainted with him when I went down there. So it was sort of a challenge to build it and sort of a game to get it done. It didn't take too long, either. In fact, my mother went to California before I started it, to visit Lucien, and stayed there all winter and by the time she came back I had it pretty well under way.

JW: Where did you get the stones for the foundation?

HH: That was a big problem. There was a man who had a quarry in Fort Thomas but he hadn't worked it lately and there wasn't much stone there. I got what there was. And the house was built back from the street, and to get those trucks full of stone back, and we were building in March when the ground was soft, it took a lot of stone just to put in the driveway to get the trucks back there. Then I built a stone chimney all the way up from -- and a big fireplace which was something I always wanted. My mother was really very lenient in a way to let me have all that freedom, but really it was something that she could like, too, so it worked out all right.

JW: Was it wood frame?

HH: Yes, it was a frame house. I didn't trust my bricklaying skill enough in 1923 but two years later we built another house and this house, as I said, was back from the street and there was room in front of it for a second house with a driveway going back to our

place. And that house I built to sell it and pay for the first one. I built that of brick. Did a pretty good job, too. But in those days, too, the house -- there was vacant country in the back of our house which was very nice and a way to the river, you could get down to the river that way without going through the city. So I was quite happy there. I had friends, too. Some of them were just friends that we'd go canoeing with, or take walks in the woods and things, but there was one friend, Clay Crawford, who was a doctor who was some years older than I was, he took quite an interest in me and he felt that I was -- had potentials that were not being developed. He tried to "bring me out," as he said, and encourage me to be myself at whatever cost it may be.

JW: Did he take an interest in your art work or in your lifestyle?

HH: Yes. Yes. Both. Especially in the art work, and he didn't have a great deal of interest in . . . well, he did, too, when I built that cottage up at Ross that I talk about after I moved my Brent studio, he wanted to pay half the rent and have half the use of it, which he did. And for two or three years he came up there quite regularly on Wednesdays, which was his day off.

He would do things that I would like to have done there myself, go out in the river in a canoe and walk around, and we did a lot of talking, too. We'd cook a meal, "concoct stews," as somebody said. And we took two or three canoe trips, too -- two, it was. One, we hauled the canoe down to Frankfort on the Kentucky River and came down the Kentucky, and just before we got out of the Kentucky there was a heavy rain caused a runout in the river and almost got up to our tent that night. We got away without any trouble and we ran into the Ohio, it was running downstream so fast that we just went with

it. We went down below Louisville, way down in there somewhere, before we began to think about how we were to get back. We tied up one night just below the dam, below Louisville, I forget the number of it, and the next morning we realized there was a boat in the lock that would be leaving when the fog lifted. So we went down there and asked the captain if he would take us up the river.

JW: Back up to Cincinnati?

HH: Well, we didn't ask him for any more than just take us up to Louisville. He was very much against the idea and he told us very plainly, in not very elegant language, to get out of there. He was kind of provoked because he was tied up there in the fog and things weren't going right, I guess. But Clay took him aside and he was a doctor and kind of a suave talker and a very respectful man, and the captain respected him a good deal. So he finally said, "Well, you can go to Louisville with us." So we went up to Louisville; that was quite a jog, about forty miles, I guess, upstream in a slow-going tugboat. But we enjoyed it.

Our favorite place was out on the head of the tow on those empty barges, which rode so high above the water and away from the vibration and noise of the boat. We'd sit out there for hours watching the river. Got to Louisville and the captain said, "Well, if you want to go farther, you can go farther -- you can go on up to your home port up there." That was great, we thought, so we went all the way up to Cincinnati, beyond Cincinnati -- they don't stop, you know, they just keep on going. And my idea was to go up to above Brent to Ross where I had that farm -- that's where we kept the canoe -- but it got dark before we got there. I got up on the top of the boat where I was out of the lights, just to be sure of where it was. And when I was sure of the landing, I signaled the pilot and he stopped the engines,

and we went down below and launched our canoe. We couldn't be sure of whether I was right or not, but when we fell in the canoe and the boat went out and we paddled into shore just a short distance, we were right on our landing, we made it just right. But Clay, [pause] well, I don't know just how to explain his influence or what he meant for me to do, but I was pretty hard material to do anything with, in a way, even though I agreed with him, but I just couldn't do some of, couldn't go in some of the directions he proposed.

JW: What did he propose?

HH: Well, it was -- he felt that I wasn't having any sex life at all, and that I should, and he wanted me to just jump into it, as you might say. But that didn't appeal to me; I -- I still had ideas about love and all that sort of thing, and I couldn't find any girl that would pay much attention to me, because I was very honest about what I wanted to do, I wanted to go live in the woods and didn't care about earning money and didn't like the city and didn't want to have a steady job and couldn't stand it, and all that. Nowadays, I think a girl, in fact I've met several in my old age that I think, if they'd known me when I was young, we might have hit it off pretty well but. . . .

In those -- so Clay didn't have a great deal of influence on me after all, but I did meet, well, I met one woman that I liked very much and my mother did, too, she was a good friend of hers, I think she was about four years older than I was and considerably younger than my mother, of course, and we used to, she used to go out to her house and I would go along and this friend played the piano and I was trying to learn to play the violin and we tried to play together and she took a great interest in me, too. I didn't have any idea of going as far as she did, but somehow it went that way after all and I think, really think I was

seduced, myself, because I really had no, I was not the agent or the active part. And that was one of the most -- happiest and one of the most miserable times in my life because I realized in the end we could never, we could never be anything, any intimacy at all because I don't know just what she saw in me except that, well, it's hard to say but . . . or what I saw in her because she was not the kind of woman that I . . . she was very affected and she had no education to amount to anything. Her music was very elementary, but just the company of a woman was something that I had never had before and it went on for quite awhile. And I think in one of my journal entries I talk about how I stood up and said things I thought I never could say and was quite proud of myself. I think that was the end of it. There were two or three more after that; one more, anyway. But I can say that none of the, none of the relations with women in that troublesome time were anything that I'm ashamed to tell about now or look backward, wish I hadn't, it's nothing I wish I hadn't done. It was just part of my education, I guess, and after all, that's what Clay wanted me to do, get some experience. But he had sort of passed out of the picture by this time. [chuckle] Not entirely, but to some extent.

JW: Did he introduce you to any of them?

HH: To this last one that I talk about, was a friend of his. In fact, I think they were quite intimate for awhile. [pause] She was, had a lot of good ideas, too, riding bicycles and going out, we even took a canoe trip together. I was all for a canoe trip but I didn't enjoy her company a lot. It's hard to explain those things; you feel like you're just in a strong wind or a strong current, you're being carried along and finally you catch hold of a piece of driftwood somewhere and pull yourself out. But that's a strange prelude to meeting

Anna. She was – she was not exactly an orthodox person, either, in all ways. She was in many ways. Too much so for me, I guess. Another -- I'm getting a little bit ahead of my story now because I've been talking about my forty-three years with my mother and now I'm getting into the beginning of my forty-three years with Anna, which I don't think I could mix the two. Which should I talk about first?

JW: What did your mother think of your doctor friend?

HH: Well, I think she had suspicions of him at first -- the first, at the beginning, and later on she took a downright dislike to him and didn't like me to go on with our acquaintance but that was when she, that didn't happen until she was getting pretty old. But in the last, in her illness he refused to treat her and I had to get another doctor or she did.

JW: Why was she suspicious of him?

END OF TAPE 10, SIDE A

START OF TAPE 10, SIDE B

HH: Well, we're through with Dr. Crawford now, do we want to say that?

JW: Yeah.

HH: Well, she um, she'd say, "Well, I wish you would get a job and go to work in the city in dress-up clothes for a while and not go off to work in this – in your overalls and lay brick and all that sort of thing."

JW: And Dr. Crawford was pushing you in another direction?

HH: Well, he didn't say much about what I did but he was more interested in my painting. Mother had no interest in that at all but Clay did. He had a very high opinion of it, and he thought it was worth a lot of his trouble and mine, too, to develop it. That's uh --

Mother never had any use for it, she had . . . I think if I had gotten a lot of pictures in exhibitions and sold some and been a successful painter, it would have been all right. I didn't see that -- well, I tried that, too, but it didn't work. [chuckle] I just -- my painting wasn't very popular in those days because all the juries and critics, all they wanted was abstract Expressionism, New York Expressionism, and I was still plugging along doing realistic landscapes because that was my interest, that was my life and that's all I could do. And I'd never deserted it either, I never tried to do anything just to sell and get into the shows. The only move I made in that direction, one winter I said, "Well, I'm going to give up this carpenter work, brick work for awhile," and I went down and got a job with the Donaldson Lithographing Company in Newport. That was a respectable job; they'd been in business for long and she knew Mr. Donaldson, he was a member of the church that she attended in Dayton, Kentucky. So --she was happy for awhile to see me go off to work that way. But I just couldn't make a success out of it.

JW: What sort of work did you do for them?

HH: Well, at first they put me on the very elementary part of just working on the big zinc plates to reproduce the drawings into something that could be used for the posters, they were making bill posters. But then they found that I had a little more skill in drawing, so they put me in designing those things and that wasn't much good, either, because I had no interest in bill posters at all. [laughs] And then I made a few good ones, but I don't know how it ever ended; at least everybody was happy and friends on each side, I didn't make any, I didn't have any blowup or anything like that.

I thought I'd try another thing, that same winter, I think, I got a job through a friend in a commercial art studio in Cincinnati. I went over to town every day. But after awhile this man who was very friendly and all said, "Well, I don't think you'll ever make a snappy commercial drawing." And I said, "I don't think I will, either." [laughs] So I gave up, and by that time it was spring and I went back to bricklaying.

JW: What was it about your art that he felt wasn't marketable?

HH: It wasn't clever enough; it was too honest and it wasn't, even if I hadn't . . . I couldn't do what I could do now, for instance. Even now I couldn't do that kind of work but I could make a better stab at it, maybe than I could then. I was really honest and sincere in my painting then and I couldn't make a snappy commercial drawing, I'm sure.

That's just a good sample of my relations with my mother through all those years. She depended on me, she had to in a way because I kept the house going, kept it warm in winter and kept the grass mowed in summer and she was the one who wanted to buy an automobile, that was way back before we ever built the house when she wanted to get an automobile. I said no, we don't want an automobile. By that time that was part of my code, no automobiles. But earlier, when I was in high school and my brother bought an old Model T Ford, I was delighted, I thought that was the greatest thing that was ever invented. He would let me pump up the tires and check the oil, and if we were out at night, we'd stop on the road and strike a match and light the headlights. Frank got a car a little later but that Ford, it really was an ingenious car and I have a respect for it. It's so different from cars today, though. Different in principle, it's just a pure Yankee contrivance.

JW: Were you mechanically minded?

HH: Yes, I was, in a way. I can't say I did anything to prove it, except I could keep my bicycle running in good shape. [pause] I -- never much on machinery or working in metal. I like wood so much better. [tape is stopped, then is resumed]

JW: Harlan, you were the youngest of three boys; what sort of an influence did that have on the way your mother treated you?

HH: Well, of course, she had a very possessive nature and she would have liked to have kept all three of us, but Frank and Lucien both left, left the city and went to New York to live, as I've often, I've told that all before, and stayed there. Although Lucien moved to California after some years in New York. But they never lived in Bellevue again or Fort Thomas and I was the only one left at home.

It was a pretty good arrangement, in a way, because Frank and Lucien, especially Lucien, could furnish the money that my mother needed and I could, as I've said, I built the house for us to live in and took care of it and even at times when we -- when we built that second house, for awhile we were making heavy payments to the building association, and I helped out with that. But, most of the time, what money I earned I could have for myself and I had a lot of time to myself, too, which was what I wanted. In a way, it seemed like an ideal arrangement. I don't seem to remember ever being very happy about it. My mother was, I don't know, even when she was young, as I've said before, I don't think she had any great love for me and I had more of a, my relation with her was more respect and duty, but we did get along a long time. [laughs] Forty-three years, in fact, as I've said before.

JW: Were there any instances where you felt particularly close to her?

HH: Let's see . . . I think I felt more concern for her when she got older and her health began to fail and she couldn't do all the things that she used to, and that made her unhappy. She seemed to have no inner resources that would lead to happiness or contentment. We want to be doing something or going some place. There were some of the things we did together which I enjoyed. It's strange to say that I enjoyed the theater and any time she wanted to go to the play, why, I was willing to go. It seems like I can enjoy any play, even a bad one. The good ones I don't understand very well, I guess. [laughs slightly] But that was one thing we had in common together.

JW: Where would you see the plays?

HH: Cincinnati. We went over to see Katharine Hepburn and Tom Powers and Helen Hayes and all those famous people of the past. She liked movies, too, and sometimes we'd go to a movie but I never could like motion pictures; they were too – too strenuous for me. I took them too seriously, I guess. Maybe I was always a child in that direction but the play was different; it was something that you could, you knew it was a play and a movie became too real. Then when we went to see a play we went to have supper somewhere and that always pleased her.

We were always going some place, too, we made several trips both to New York and to California. I remember driving out to California at a time when that was quite a feat, even to get an automobile over the roads because the cars were not dependable and the roads were worse and there was no direct transcontinental routes either, especially out in the Midwest; you'd go into a town and you'd ask how to get to the next town, you wouldn't think about getting to Los Angeles or any place. Finally got -- and there's no

accommodations, some of the little towns would have hotels but no tourist accommodations. After awhile, it was already beginning that somebody with a spare room would take tourists in overnight -- bed and breakfast, I guess they call it now. But we had a little camping outfit arranged so that if we didn't find any place we could sleep in the car, which was not very big. Of course, I enjoyed those trips and she did, too. That was our best moments, I think. And she enjoyed it in California.

JW: Did you all use maps at all?

HH: Oh yes, we had maps, we had a lot of local maps. And there was such a thing as the Lincoln Trail and -- what do they call it? -- Lincoln Trail, I guess. But it was just a name on paper, it wasn't finished. We even got into, just missed getting into that corduroy road, when you cross the Colorado River into the sandy desert, they had a road made of railroad ties, a one-way road, you seem to have heard about it. The remains of that road were still there where you drive along on a blacktop road and see it, but we just missed it.

JW: It would have been bumpy.

HH: That would have been a terrible experience but a little worthwhile, maybe.

JW: Did your mother drive as well?

HH: No, she never learned to drive. She wanted to very badly and I tried to teach her; maybe I was a poor teacher, if she had had somebody else . . . but she wasn't very apt mechanically, either. She had trouble with simpler machines than automobiles. She did try to get so that she could drive a little bit but she worried everybody in Fort Thomas that she'd

ask them to go with her to a card club or something and they were on pins and needles all the time. So she finally gave up and let me do the driving.

JW: Could you drive at night in those days?

HH: Yeah, yeah, we had headlights. [chuckle] Most of the trips, the early trips especially to New York, would have been on the train and the first time we went to California was on the Santa Fe, taking the Chief from Chicago, which – that was a great experience for me. Steam locomotives. And I'd get off at every station and walk up to see the engine.

JW: Did you get to know the engineers?

HH: No, they were too remote. Then when we got an automobile, I was facing the railroads, too, because very often those early roads followed the railroads, parallel with them. I remember down in Texas we followed a train, well, for fifty miles, I guess, and just about kept up with it, it would go faster than we did sometimes and then it'd stop and we'd catch up with it and there it was. We got to know the conductors, they'd wave at us that time, they saw us so often. Maybe I just wanted to stay with them.

JW: How old were you when you went out to California?

HH: Well, when I first went out I was in my twenties, twenty-seven, six, somewhere along in there. I liked California in some ways but I was very miserable in my brother's house. I got out of it as much as I could and I took some long walks and hikes out in the desert there. The desert fascinated me more than anything.

JW: Did he live in southern California?

HH: Yeah. He lived in Beverly Hills, and he was a . . . My mother lapped it up pretty well, she was -- the fame and motion pictures, came to see them, she was always all ears and eyes but I never had much interest. . . . I did enjoy -- shouldn't say enjoy -- but it was very fascinating to watch them make motion pictures and Lucien was very thoughtful that way. He'd take me with him when he went in to work some mornings and let me stay around for two or three hours and watch the film that was being made at that time. I saw a good deal of the filming of *Wings*, which was one of the biggest pictures he ever made in that business. Then he'd let me have the car for the rest of the day and I'd call for him in the afternoon when he was ready to go home.

One of my greatest enjoyments in California was going to visit Charles and Minnie Hoehn, those were the people I worked for on the farm in upstate New York when I was in high school. They moved out to California finally and they had a son living there. They lived in southern California, not far from Los Angeles. It was in a house that was such a home-like place and they were such homely, friendly people and they made so much over me, they thought I was wonderful. Lucien was a little bit severe and his wife was more so; she didn't think I rated very highly. Strange thing. She and Frank got along so well, she thought Frank was wonderful, but I was the black sheep in the family, which didn't help my stay in California very much.

I could go into a lot of details about my sisters-in . . . or Frank's wife and Lucien's wife, but I owe a great deal to Frank's wife. She came into the picture about 1917. They were married in New York soon after my mother and I went there and I was going to high school there. And she was the first adult person that I ever met or talked with that gave me

any rating at all. She thought I was equal to the rest of the family, to my two brothers, and better in some ways and set me up pretty well. I – I didn't get vain or anything, I just felt I had more to live for after I met her than I ever had before. I really owe a great deal to Frances.

JW: How did she convey to you that she appreciated you?

HH: Well, she would, oh, sometimes we would go downtown to meet Frank and we'd go down on a train from Larchmont where they lived, and we'd spend time in the Metropolitan Museum or the New York Public Library and we'd just talk, and she would consider me as her equal and I wasn't just a little boy any more. She even bought me Christmas presents, which I was a little bit . . . unappreciative at first but I realized that she was just . . . a warm bathrobe, for instance: she said, "You can put this on when you come home from skating." Tried to make me a civilized person instead of wild as I was in some ways. But she . . . Alice, that's Lucien's wife, she never, we never hit it off at all. We tried to, both of us, we had some things we liked and we'd emphasize that. So I was glad to get away from Beverly Hills and go out in the desert.

And then Anna and I, we went out another time and made one trip to California, that was -- we won't get into the Anna business yet because that's going to be, we'll keep her out of the picture until we get all through with these earlier things.

JW: How did the landscape in California strike you?

HH: I didn't like southern California very much but the desert, I thought that was wonderful. Some of the best, some of the best water colors I've made there, they would rank with the best Ohio River water colors that I've ever made, better in some ways because

they were more mature. I still have those, I think. I must get them out some time and mount them.

JW: Was it difficult to draw the colors and the vegetation since it wasn't . . .

HH: I soon, I soon got it because I stayed there in the desert for quite awhile. My brother had some property in the desert which we used, he had planted palm trees and drilled wells, and I used to stay out there with his brother-in-law, Alice's wife, uh, Alice's two brothers. They were doing work out there in overseeing it, but that was my happiest time in California when I was out there in the desert.

JW: So your brother was fairly successful.

HH: Yes, he was. I don't think he was, in my notion, he wasn't as successful as some people think he was, because I don't think the pictures he made showed much imagination. He was more an executive, he got things done and he was skilled in all departments; he could write, and write a scenario and, I don't think he did much directing but he did a lot of supervising. He was in charge of a picture from its very inception till it was filmed.

JW: What was his title?

HH: Supervisor for one, that's his final title, but at first he was a writer, a scenario writer.

JW: Did he work for just one studio?

HH: No, he worked for a lot of them. He went out under the, at first it was Lasky and then he got acquainted with Darryl Zanuck and moved in with him. Those are all names that you never – don't remember at all, I guess, but they were quite well known in

those days. [pause] Then Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer was his last position. [pause] Well, I guess that's enough of California. What more can we say about my mother or do you think we've covered that pretty well? [tape is stopped, then is resumed]

JW: Did she encourage you to meet girls and how did she receive the friends that you made?

HH: She encouraged me, theoretically, but in practice, she discouraged me if you can understand what I mean. She meant well, but her nature was such that she wanted to keep me where I was, as her son, and she felt that -- in a way that she was entitled to it, she had three boys and I was always with her. And it made it difficult for me, especially toward the end, because I felt more and more that I must get away and live my own life. But then the only thing that saved it was that it was a good chance for me to go on painting, and some of the best things I've done, I realize now, were done in that period, 1930 to '40, when it was a time [laughs] when I wasn't very happy about some other things but that saved the day really. And I did a lot of other things besides paint, too; I was learning to listen to music and I got very fond, got wrapped up and would go to symphony concerts. Clay and I used to have tickets to the symphony concerts. I was -- at that time I thought I could learn to play the violin and I was working at that and took some lessons from young student teachers.

I started to write, too; when I first came back from New York when I, that journal, for instance, it furnished material for this latest book was written, some selections are made from the journal from 1929 to '44 just so it would fit into *Shantyboat* and *Payne Hollow*, yeah to *Shantyboat*, and *Payne Hollow* which followed it. It goes on until 1968, the journal does. Of course, it's been mined to make *Shantyboat* and *Payne Hollow*, that's where the

source, the source for both of those books is. I still think there must be something in there that hasn't been used yet. So I did quite a lot of writing in those days, even though it wasn't very formal. It wasn't until 19, in the 194-- the late '40s, that I began to write the book *Shantyboat*, after we got back.

JW: Let's go back to your mother. When did her health start failing her?

HH: She had sort of a stroke, a slight stroke, you might call it, [pause] let's see, it was before I was married so it must have been -- way before, because she died in 1943, it must have been in the late '30s -- and it was a hard time for her and a hard time for me, too, because she lost part of her reason partly, her main idea that she wanted to go back home to that house she knew so well and she was in it all the time. She got out of the hospital and went back there but she never quite grasped the fact.

JW: Did you spend a lot of time with her at that point? Did you stay with her?

HH: Yes, I was practically her nurse. We had a woman to come at times and spend awhile and they didn't stay long; and Frank came out for awhile and he was going to change everything but he didn't. He finally came, came around to take care of her himself. It wasn't really much caring, I guess it was to see that she had some food in her, didn't get in trouble anyway. But it was rather confining.

JW: Were you working at that point?

HH: No, I don't think so, toward the end, I didn't try to take on any work. I could have but I did . . . by that time had built a studio in the back yard in Fort Thomas, which I mention in the *Journal* book and that was my salvation. When I had to stay home most all the time I had a long wire reaching from -- could have made it electric, I guess -- from the

house out to the studio and Mom would jerk the wire to get me when she wanted me. I did some good work there. I enjoyed it. And there was a garden in the backyard, which was nice.

JW: What sort of things did you plant in the garden?

HH: Oh, just the regular stuff: tomatoes and beans and tomatoes mostly, I guess.

I'd experiment with some things, though.

JW: Did you do the cooking once your mother was ill?

HH: Yes, yes, I had to. She kept it up as long as she possibly could, though, because feeding me was one of the delights of her life, I guess. [laughs]

JW: Did you enjoy when you fed her?

HH: No, that didn't work so well. She was never very hungry. I was always, when she cooked for me, I always ate with a great appetite. I've enjoyed things then that I've never had since or never will have, I guess. Like strawberry shortcake. Nobody knows how to make a strawberry shortcake now; you buy something in the store that they call strawberry shortcake.

JW: Did she make it with biscuits?

HH: Yeah, she made it with biscuits, the biscuit . . . she was a terrible biscuit maker but somehow the shortcake always turned out well. Frances, that's Frank's wife, was going to make a shortcake like our mother used to make and Frank was trying to tell her how to do it and Frances said, "Of course, you cut up the strawberries," and Frank said, "No, mash them." [chuckle] That was the kind that we were used to. Put them on the dough and let it soak there for awhile until it soaked into the dough and then put some fresh ones on

top. But it wasn't very good, nutritionally, because you're eating all that white flour and sugar but, which is something I've gotten away from entirely since I've been living, since I've been trained by Anna. She had some very good ideas along that line.

JW: What other things would your mother make that you particularly liked?

END OF TAPE 10, SIDE B